

1661

Dr. BISSE's
SERMON

Before the HONOURABLE

House of COMMONS,

May 29. 1714.

Luna 31 Die Maii, 1714.

Order'd,

THAT the Thanks of this House
be given to Dr. BISSE, Prea-
cher at the Rolls, for the Sermon
by him Preached before this House the
29th Instant, at St. Margaret's West-
minster, and that he be desired to Print
the same: And that Sir Thomas Powell,
Mr. Jennings, Mr. Stephens, Mr. Lau-
gharn, and Mr. Hungerford, do acquaint
him with the same.

PAUL JODRELL, Dom' Com'



A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the Honourable
House of Commons,

A T
St. Margaret's Westminster,

On Saturday, May 29. 1714.

By THOMAS BISSE, D. D.

Preacher at the *Rolls*, and Chaplain in
Ordinary to Her MAJESTY.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *W. Wilkins*, for HENRY CLEMENTS at the
Half Moon in *St. Paul's Church Yard*. 1714.

SERMON

Preached before the Honourable

House of Commons

AT

St. Andrew's Church, Westminster

On 29. 1714.



By Thomas Bisset, D.D.

Preacher at the said Church, and Chaplain in
Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON

Printed by W. Hall, at the Honey Combs at the
New Moon in St. Andrew's Church Lane. 1714.

P S A L. lxxi. 20.

*Thou which hast shewed me great
and sore Troubles, shalt quicken
me again, and shalt bring me up
again from the Depths of the
Earth.*

Or according to the Old Translation.

*O what great Troubles and Adversities
hast thou shewed me! Yet didst
thou return and refresh me; yea,
and broughtest me from the Deep
of the Earth again.*

THIS Sentence, wherein is contained an Acknowledgment of fore Judgments reliev'd by a Succession of equal Mercies, our CHURCH hath thought fit to apply to her own State, when after the Days of her fore Adversity she was revived by the blessed RESTORATION!

Great indeed were the Troubles which God hath shewed us, for they ended in our Destruction; and no less was the Refreshment he gave us, being

equal to a Resurrection; *For he brought us from the Deep of the Earth again.* The Body of our CONSTITUTION, comprehending CHURCH and STATE, was utterly dissolved by that REBELLION: And as our mortal Body after its dissolution, may (as is supposed) sometimes pass into the Shapes of Men, of Beasts, and of Fishes; so this CONSTITUTION after its destruction passed into several Shapes of Religions and Governments, some whereof were partly human, others were perfectly monstrous: when at length, behold! our National Resurrection was wrought by him *that raiseth the Dead*; which was declared to be his Work from the shortness of Time as well as greatness of the Miracle: For in respect of the Time it might not improperly be said to have been *brought to pass as in a Moment, and in the Twinkling of an Eye.*

There is but one Instance of God's Judgments upon the *Jewish* Nation, that can be brought as a Parallel to our own Case, which was their Excision by the CAPTIVITY, when they lived without King, without Laws, without a Temple. And

Ezek. 32. 1, 2. God compares their Captive State to that of *dead Bones*, that lay in the Valley disjointed and *very dry*; and makes the restoring the one an equal Proof of his Omnipotence as the raising the other: For thus he tells the House of *Israel*, upon the Promise of their Restoration, *Then shall ye know that I am the Lord, when I have brought you out of your Graves.*

Ver. 13.

THIS is that great Day, whereon God manifested himself to be our Lord, by *giving us also a Reviving, to set up the House of our God, and to repair the Desolations thereof.* Wherefore This Day
justly

justly claims for ever an Anniversary Thanksgiv-
 ing from the People of this Land, since to this
 we owe that *we are a People*. And as it requires
 a standing Duty, so has it its standing Uses. For
these Things happened to our Fathers, not so much for ^{1 Cor. 10.}
 their Punishments, which tho' just were but tem- ^{&c.}
 porary, as for *Ensamles to us* and to our Children
 after us for ever. And as the History of them is writ-
 ten, so this Commemoration of them is appointed
 for our *Admonition* as well as Thanksgiving, to the
Intent that we should not lust after new Things, which
 are evil, as our Fathers lusted; nor murmur against the
 present, as our Fathers murmured; and were destroyed
 of the Destroyer.

Now tho' we do not presume to search into the
 deep Things of Providence, which in relation to
 Persons, much more then of Kingdoms, are folded
 up in Darkness and Uncertainty; yet since *what*
Things happened to our Fathers, were for *Ensamles to*
us, and designed for the *Admonition* of our Poste-
 rity, it will not, we hope, be thought unsuitable
 to this Solemnity, nor unuseful to our selves, to
 consider what might be presumed to be the prin-
 cipal Intents or Designs of God with regard to Us,
 when he caused our Fathers to pass under such
 prodigious Revolutions. And herein we shall con-
 sider both the principal Intent, which God seemed
 to have in those *great and sore Troubles*, wherein he
 suffered our CONSTITUTION to be destroyed;
 and afterwards his chief Design in raising it again
 at the blessed RESTORATION. And from this
 View of our present Prosperity set off by the
 Scene of those *sore Adversities*, we shall have our
 Hearts better disposed and warm'd to join in this

our great National Jubilee, in *this Day of great Joy unto our People.* And,

First, God by those *great and sore Troubles* suffered our CONSTITUTION to be destroyed to this Intent, that this Nation might be convinced ever after of the Excellency of it.

Secondly, God by Restoring it, and that in so miraculous a manner, hath added his own Special approbation to it, and as it were, *set to his Seal*, that it is good.

Thirdly, God by Restoring both Parts of our CONSTITUTION, *viz.* the CHURCH and STATE together, as they had been destroyed together, hath declared to us the necessary Union and Incorporation of the one with the other. And,

First, God by those *great and sore Troubles* suffered our CONSTITUTION to be destroyed to this Intent, that this Nation might be convinced ever after of the Excellency of it.

From the first Accounts of this Nation, *an ancient Nation*, we find it visited by Civil Wars, great and terrible; insomuch that as there is no Part of our History without the sad Relations, so there is no Part of our Country without as sad Monuments and Sepulchres of our slaughter'd Ancestors. But notwithstanding these unnatural Wars, and the prodigious Effusion of Blood in each, perhaps not inferior to the Waste of the late REBELLION, yet never till then was our National *Sickness unto Death*. And the Reason was obvious: for the Subjects never till then took up Arms out of an Hatred to

to Kingly Government, as in its Nature but an inferior Degree of Usurpation, and in its Influence injurious to the Interests of any People. They never till then rose up against the Ecclesiastical Part of our CONSTITUTION, as the Work of Antichrist; nor was there ever before heard a Cry for razing our *Jerusalem*, as if it were *Babylon*, saying, *Down with it, down with it even to the Ground.* They never thought of sharing her Revenues, not even in the Popish Times, when they would have been a much richer Spoil. A Rebellion founded on these Principles was reserved for these latter Days, when our Forefathers, ungrateful for the blessed REFORMATION, forgetting what great Things God had done for them when he brought them out of the *Iron Furnace*, were soon after deliver'd over to a discontented and murmuring Spirit. They sunk into a Dislike of the Reformed Church, and thence of the Monarchy that supported it; till upon the same levelling Principle both became an equal Grievance, the Transition being natural from Schismatics to Republicans; *for one Spirit lives in them both.*

For whatever popular Objections were taken up by them against the chief Governours in those Days, so nearly resembling those raised by *Corah* and his Company against *Moses* and *Aaron*, yet in both Cases the real Grievance was not at their Persons but their Powers. The Accusation was, That they took too much upon them, *seeing all* Numb. the Congregation according to their Enthusiastick 16. 13. Divinity was holy every one; and by this invisible Unction of Nature as qualify'd and commission'd to administer in CHURCH and STATE, as if anointed

anointed with material Oil, and instated by a public Investiture in those high Dignities.

Upon these Principles the Leaders in that REBELLION set up their Standard: And 'tis no wonder, that in that Sin (*which is as the Sin of Witchcraft*) so many Persons of Figure and Influence in this great Kingdom, yea *Princes of the Assembly, famous in the Congregation, Men of Renown,* should be involved; rising gradually from Discontents to Complaints, from Complaints to Petitions, from Petitions to Remonstrances, from Remonstrances to Rebellion; by the Fury whereof our whole Polity was at length dissolved, and the People consumed, not as God threatned the *Israelites in a moment*, but by a lingring War, the highest Testimony of his great Wrath. So great, so sore were those *Troubles which God shewed us*, which yet were but preliminary to greater.

For when that sinful Generation had by the pretended Assistance, tho' visible Malediction of Heaven, prevail'd against their own happy Establishment, they went as aforetime to seek unto the Lord. And they asked of God a REPUBLICK, and *he gave them a REPUBLICK in his Wrath.* And let those that inherit the same Principles and Wishes (if such there be) review what their Ancestors, those dear Purchasers of Misery, obtain'd. For after they had drawn out all their hidden Treasure, and had in their Zeal *pluck'd off their very Earrings*, and cast them into the REBELLION, that great Fire, behold! according to their Request *there came out this Calf*: And tho' they sat down, and play'd about the Idol for a Time; yet when it was afterwards broken down with Contempt,
ground

ground to Powder, and strewed upon the publick Streams, the Idolaters themselves were compelled by the USURPER (most just in that) to drink deepest of those bitter Waters.

For as to the **CIVIL** Change, behold! now the Royal Scepter, which was of *pure Gold*, was changed into a *Rod of Iron*; and those Subjects, who protested loudly against the holding up of the one, must now without a Word bear the Bruises of the other. Together with the Royal Throne were all the Steps leading up to it, the gradual Orders of the **NOBILITY**, molten down in the common Mass. The Senate of **NOBLES**, which had mortally wounded their own Body by cutting off one Essential Branch, was now dissipated with greater Contempt; And in their Retirement their Palaces were but Prisons of State, and their hereditary Demesnes but liminary Precincts to confine them.

As to this **HONOURABLE HOUSE** (ever **HONOURABLE** but then) which in Conjunction with the Nobles, and a joint Subordination to the Throne, is the main Strength of our **CONSTITUTION**, what was it then but the infamous Remains of a Body pieced up of the old Veterans in Rebellion, Men accursed, and *to every good Work reprobate*? And what are all their pretended **ORDINANCES** and presumptuous Ensigns of State, but the solemn Badges of Vassallage, and as Pageants to adorn the Triumphs of the **USURPER**?

If we look to the **ECCLESIASTICAL** Change, the Bishops with all the subordinate Body of the Clergy were thrust out of the Sanctuary; and in their stead Priests were made out of the lowest of
the

Sam. 4.2. **the People.** Thus, as *Zion* bewaileth her State, *her precious Sons comparable to fine Gold* were succeeded by *earthen Pitchers the Work of the Potter*; which being Vessels unadorned, and unclean, and no wise fit for the Master's use, made the Offering of the Lord to be universally abhorred. In a word, then was every Man cursed with that Liberty, which their Successors renew their Claim to, of chusing his own Religion and his own Priest. And as the People of *Israel*, when they forsook the living God, ran after Variety of Gods which were no Gods: So the miserable People of this Land, when they forsook the Establish'd Form of Worship, heap'd to themselves Multitude of Religions which were no Religions.

Judg. 8.
16.

Under the Load and Continuance of these great and sore Troubles, wearied with Vanities, and torn with Distractions, then this foolish Nation look'd back with Anguish, acknowledging with Tears the Excellency of their ancient Government; then they found out the Notion of Liberty by the sharp Instruction of Bondage; then they knew how to value Property, when it lay at Mercy. Thus were they awakened to a full Notion of their REBELLION, when like the Men of *Succoth* they were taught with Thorns. At that time also how did they bemoan the Desolation of this excellent CHURCH! They sat down and wept, when they remember'd thee, O *Sion*.

There is a strange Perverseness and Ingratitude in Mankind, that the Value of all sublunary Blessings must be taught us by their Loss, or by the Interchange of Adversity; of Health by Sicknes, of Life by Death, of Peace by War, of Government by

by Anarchy, of Allegiance by Rebellion. The Sovereign is, as it were, the Sun to our Political World: and after that dark INTERREGNUM, when he appear'd not in many Years, and no small Tempest lay on us, with what Rejoicing did he break out again at the RESTORATION? With what Transport did we embrace the Kingly Government? What Demonstrations of Joy, what Testimonies of Gratitude were there (as on this Day) read in every Face, heard from every Voice? For this National Transport, this universal sound of Rejoicing was the language of Nature, whose Reasonings the Wise cannot gainsay, whose Motions the Mighty cannot resist. *It was meet, said our transported Fathers in that Day, that we should make merry and be glad; for this our Government was dead, and is alive again.*

But this universal Voice of Thanksgiving, which even Nature seem'd to have extorted from them, Institution commands and Gratitude requires from us, who equally partake of the Blessing without any Share in the Adversity. But then *let us shew forth the Praise of our Deliverer, not only with our Lips on this joyful Anniversary, but in our Lives by an unshaken Loyalty.* Let us learn Obedience to our Sovereign by the things, which our Fathers suffer'd for their Rebellion. We have seen, how during that Series of Confusions they try'd the Government thro' every Form and Shape, and were sick with the Experiment. Besides, those several new Models were the first Essays of their kind: and the Love of what is new, or Imitation of what is foreign, might be pleaded to have enchanted them into that pleasing Sin of Innovation.

But what might have the Pretence of Curiosity in them, would be avowed Obstinacy in us. After their repeated Miscarriage should we attempt new Essays, we *have no Cloak for our Sin*, no Mitigation, no Pretence to Pity from the Nations, nor Mercy from the Heavens; since many of us have seen with our Eyes, all have heard with our Ears what our suffering Fathers have told us; that the Experiment must be made by much Fire, and the Production (as before) a misshapen Idol and an Abomination.

Having thus far took a View of the *great Troubles and Adversities which God had shewn us*, and beheld the Church and Monarchy for a while lying in the Grave, as it were forsaken of God and forgotten of Men, whilst their triumphant Enemies trampled over their Heads, we shall be enabled with greater Joyfulness to behold them rising again, when the *Lord returned and refresh'd them, and brought them up from the Deep of the Earth*: a marvelous and great Sight to us and to all People, to see the entire Frame of our Constitution reared up at once compacted and uniform; the Monarchy with all its Hereditary Powers and Royal Lustre; the Church with its ancient Privileges and Revenues, which had passed under Plunder, Sequestration, and all the Forms of Sacrilege. But as the Lord will, at the general Restoration, *say to the Sea, Give up; and to Death, Keep not back*; so as it were by his Omnipotent Command these Destroyers, devouring as the Sea and greedy as Death, delivered up the sacred Spoils of the **CROWN and CHURCH** from every Quarter.

Now

(II)

Now to prepare our Minds for a due Sense of this National Blessing, and to give us yet an higher Value for the Excellency of Our CONSTITUTION, let us see under the *Second* General,

Secondly, How God himself by Restoring it, and that in so miraculous a Manner, hath given his own Special approbation to it, and as it were, *set to his Seal*, that it is good.

And herein it will be necessary to consider those two great Essentials of our CONSTITUTION, *viz.* the CHURCH and STATE, apart. And,

1. Let us see how the RESTORATION was a standing Testimony, and as it were a Seal of God's Approbation to the Truth and Excellency of this Establish'd CHURCH, as the purest and most Apostolical Branch of the "Catholick Church militant here on Earth.

As for the Church of *Rome*, when she was driven out of this Land at the REFORMATION, her Return was also secluded and barr'd against by the Sale and Division of her Revenues among the People. And it is doubtless the strongest of all human Bars, where there are so many great Interests united against the Return of Popery, one whereof is a better Security than the Cry of a thousand Voices. But when this Church was rooted out at the REBELLION, the same Method proved ineffectual, tho' secured by all possible Ways of Sale, Inte change, and Mixture of Estates, and Removal of Landmarks; yea, tho' those who attended at her Crucifixion, upon the Partition of *her Raiment* took every Man a Part, had the same Sword to secure, with which they had taken. But God said,

Let there be a Restoration of my Church, *and it was so.* And what was also the Lord's doing, with some greater Advantage than before : For those Lay-Possessors *being wiser in their Generation,* those Robbers would not be robb'd ; but recover'd many Things, which had been sunk by that strange depraved Inclination in Men, and (as is thought) Venial sacrilege in robbing the Church. So then the Extirpation of the *Romish* Religion out of this Land was perpetual, like that of the *Canaanites* ; for they were rejected : Whereas the Expulsion of this Church was temporary, like the Captivity of the *Jews* ; for we were only punished.

On the other hand, if we compare our Church with the Protestant Churches abroad, they in many Parts of the Reformation almost approach unto us. And *we would to God, that they were not only almost, but altogether such as we are.* But be their Constitutions what they will, yet in most of them EPISCOPACY is still wanting : An Order, which if establish'd (as they allow) only by the Usage of the Primitive Ages of the Church, ought to be reverenc'd for its Antiquity ; but if (as we believe) by Christ and his Apostles, ought ever to be retain'd for its Divine Institution. Wherefore our National Church at her Reformation, rejecting only what was sinful or superfluous, and retaining what was necessary and expedient, necessary to her Being and expedient to her Well-being, ("as it was meet, right, and her bounden Duty to do) may and ought to be allowed as approaching nearest to the Apostolical Pattern of any Church now in the Christian World. Neither shall any Nation rob us of this Boasting ; nor can the

the Fame of our Arms, our Learning, our Commerce, or Government, any wise equal it. But it pleas'd the Lord in that general Desolation to suffer her to be trodden down, and this **CANDLESTICK** to be overturn'd which bore round about so many glorious Branches. During that dark Interval he might have chosen out in the large Circle of the REFORMATION a Church, wherein to have plac'd his holy **CANDLESTICK**: but it pleas'd him in his adorable Goodness rather to rebuild this his old Tabernacle for its Reception, and to give it a Restitution, rather than a Removal; *even so Lord, for so it seemed good in thy Sight*: Whether thou looking back to its Reformation, wast pleas'd to remember that it was dedicated to thee by the Blood of thy martyr'd Prelates, and afterwards of thy martyr'd Servant, our **SOVEREIGN**: Or whether thou looking forwards hast forseen and pre-ordain'd, that this Nation, being sever'd, and as it were enclosed from other Nations, might hereafter be the most *sure resting Place for it*: Or that extending its Secular Interests among the Nations around, it might also recommend its Ecclesiastical Establishment; and by planting **EPISCOPACY** among the Protestant States, might perfect the Reformation where it is begun; and by retaining that Essential, might invite the Catholick States to a Reformation, among whom for want of this it is chiefly condemn'd: Or whether this Nation extending its Commerce to distant Regions of the Earth, might withal **PROPAGATE** the Gospel, and set up thy **CANDLESTICK** in those benighted Nations, where it might shine with a pure and unmixed Light,

Light, before Schism or Superstition take Possession.

Whatever glorious things God may reserve for this National Church in distant Nations and Times ; yet this Restoration of her from the Dust proclaims to all, that God had a peculiar Favour unto her; in that in the Sight of all her Enemies and against their Efforts, of the Papists that had been concurring, and of the Protestants that had been *consenting unto her Death*, he did raise her again to Life in a triumphant manner, and we trust, *to dye no more*.

Let us now consider the other Part of our CONSTITUTION, *viz.* the STATE, which is the only CIVIL Government of its kind now left in the Christian World, and to which God by the RESTORATION seemed to give an equal Testimony, as he did to the ECCLESIASTICAL.

Tho' the Governments of this World be not made (like the Tabernacle) after any Pattern given from above, but have been left by God to be cast into different moulds by the Wisdom of their Founders or Will of their Conquerors; yet upon the comparison of their several Forms that Government may be judged the best, which the joint Reason of Nations (being the Voice of God) has approved; and which the joint Experience of Times (being the Witness of God) has confirm'd. This happy CONSTITUTION, which we now boast of as peculiar to our selves, was (as far as we have any Light from Antiquity) enjoyed in common by the Nations round about, tho' God has now changed them no less in the Forms of their Governments, than in *the bounds of their habitations*. For alas! how are all the ancient Monarchies

narchies of *Europe* unhappily transformed into Arbitrary Governments? And what were the most flourishing Republicks in their Original, but imperfect Forms cut off from kingly Government, the Establishments of successful Rebellion, at the first not worth, and at length too strong for a Reduction? So that our MONARCHY alone remains in its ancient Form, as it was delivered down to us from our Ancestors, being equally poized between those Extreames of our Neighbours, between the Rigour of a *Tyranny*, and the Level of a *Democracy*.

And indeed the People of this whole Land seem to be of a Genius, that will bear neither. For 'tis very remarkable, how the Northern Kingdom of this Island, which had with this her Sister Nation run the whole Length of the REBELLION, upon the Subversion of the Monarchy would accompany her no farther; neither could she be prevail'd upon (as our noble Historian, a Person not only *the Glory of his Time* but *worthy to be had in everlasting Remembrance*, informs us) when * "she had a fair Clar. Fol. Vol. III. p. 221.

" Invitation from her to become likewise a Republick, and *thus to play the Harlot also*. And what was no less remarkable, this Nation which was at first so fond of her new Model, in a few Years grew so weary of it, so ashamed of her own Workmanship, that she † "petition'd to have the Monarchy set Ibid. p. 461.

up again, even in the Person of the USURPER. But when this could not be effected, (her Punishments being not yet fill'd up) after her repeated Strugglings and abortive Efforts *for she had not Strength of her self to bring forth*, God was pleased in his own time to restore the kingly Government in its full Perfection, as it is established at this Day,

being

being the only Remainder of that ancient and universal Government of this Western Division of the World, from which by the Permission of God other Nations have swerv'd, and to which at his Command they may probably return. And thus our whole CONSTITUTION might be reserved as a Standard Model for a general Reformation in the Civil and Ecclesiastical World. But as *Balam* Numb. 24. said of the remote Changes in *Israel*, *Alas ! who shall* 23. *live when the Lord doth this ?*

But to proceed: As we have view'd the two great Essentials of our CONSTITUTION apart, let us now consider them united, which leads us to our *Third General*; namely, to shew

Thirdly, How God by Restoring both the CHURCH and STATE together, as they had been destroyed together, hath hereby declared the essential Congruity, Union, and Incorporation of the one with the other; so that henceforth they ought to be looked upon, *as no more twain*.

We judge not now from that Similitude which runs thro' the Constitution of each, nor from their Union under one Head: we judge at present only from Facts of their necessary Union, in as much, as that in their Fall *they were not divided*, so were they joined in the RESTORATION.

It seems an hard Fate upon our Established Church, that those Men who cannot seduce her into Principles or the least Thoughts of Disloyalty, cease not to accuse her as inclined to Arbitrary Power, and that her Averseness to Schism is but a Tendency to Superstition. Whereas let us cast our Eyes back to a late Reign, when an Arbitrary Government was coming on; what Friendship to it, what

what Tendency, what Marks of Sympathy were found in this *faithful Spouse* of Christ? How was *She* on the contrary discountenanced, disgraced, imprisoned, persecuted; whilst her Oppressors and Accusers, like *Herod and Pilate*, were made *Friends in that day*, went openly hand in hand, mutually rejoicing to see *Her* (like her Lord) exposed to the People, with her *Hands bound and a Crown of Thorns upon her Head*? As in the severe Tryal of her Constancy under that Arbitrary Reign she *went into Bonds and Imprisonment*, so in that severer under the merciless Rebellion she *was faithful unto Death*.

And we cannot omit one peculiar Evidence to prove Kingly Government no less inseparable from the Church. For when the USURPER would have set it up alone, tho' he had ten times greater Power to rebuild than he had to demolish, and ten times greater Appetite to wear the Crown than he had to pluck it from the Head of his Sovereign; yet his Policy, so renown'd for Success in compleat Wick- edness, miscarry'd in this half Design. No; as it had been pluck'd down by the antecedent Ruin of the Church, so God would not permit it to be set up again but by a joint Restoration: *to be a memorial to the House of Israel for ever*, that what God hath by such manifold Testimonies evidently join'd together, no man should put asunder.

Thus we have gone thro' our Considerations on this Subject; and shall beg leave, before we close, to make from them these Observations.

I. From the nature of those *great and sore Troubles*, viz. a Civil War within our selves, let us hence learn, not to put our National Confidence in any external Power: not in the Strength of our Si-
D
tuation,

tuation; nor, because we are encompassed by the Sea, a Barrier stronger than the high Mountains, or by our Naval Force, which is securer than both; let us therefore say, *we shall see no evil*; since
 Ezek. 28. God can verify that Threatning upon our Israel, I
 17, 18. *will bring forth a Fire from the midst of thee, which shall devour thee, and in thy ashes I will lay thee before Kings.*

Our Danger is now, as it was then, and must ever be to so mighty a Kingdom, from and within our selves: and truly the Materials for Sedition seem greater, and *the Pile is much Wood*, and Incendiaries run to and fro with Torches in their hands; but this is our Security, all must come to nought, *unless the breath of the Lord kindles it.*

II. From the second General, *viz.* the Blessed RESTORATION, a Miracle so far beyond and contrary to the Power and Wisdom of this World; from this Miracle let all our Political Atheists (those avowed Enemies to Kingly Government) know assuredly that, notwithstanding all their destructive Plans, there is an over-ruling Providence which *plucketh up and planteth, killeth and maketh alive*, according to his just but unsearchable Judgments.

There is in every State and every Age a *sinful and adulterous Generation of Men*, that except they see *Signs and Wonders*, they will not believe. Now there cannot be given to the numerous Scoffers of this Nation a greater Sign, than that wondrous and ever memorable Work of the RESTORATION. The Revolutions of States, when thrown off the Hinges of Government, which are frequent every where, are indeed *Signs from Heaven*, tho' of a lesser Magnitude. These are Demonstrations to
 untain-

untainted Minds, that there is a God above, who sways all the Affairs of this inferior World with an irresistible Hand. But that Restoration was a Change beyond all Revolutions, amounting to a Resurrection: and those must be arrived beyond the common Size of Infidelity, who *will not be persuaded, tho' a Nation rose from the dead.*

Nay God, who makes his Enemies to be his chief Witnesses, and his Accusers his Advocates, caused all human Powers, both at home and abroad, to conspire for the Prevention of this great thing, he was about to do. From abroad they sent over all the publick Assistance they could; and, which was more, all the secret Intelligence they found, perpetually advising the Usurpers at home to watch over the scatter'd Adherents to the old Constitution, and by all other possible Methods *to make the Sepulchre sure*: and the Managers of that time, Men of great Artifice and of too great Experience, *made it as sure as they could* by Law and by Arms, by their redoubled ORDINANCES (as it were) *sealing the Stone*, and by a standing Army *setting a Watch*. But there is no Opposition to Omnipotence: No Power could stay the Hand; no Acts of Men could bar the Purposes of God. And when he, at whose Voice every Prison must open, and the Gates of Hell (tho' prevailing for a time) must be unbarred, sent down his Angel to bring this Constitution from the deep of the Earth again, *all the Keepers became as dead Men.*

But this unparallel'd Work of divine Providence was not designed so much for the Conviction of ill Men, as to be Matter for the perpetual Praise and Admiration of the Righteous. What there-

fore remains, shall be to point out some few Remarks on the Circumstances of this great Transaction, for which this Blessed Day ought in a peculiar manner *to be much observed unto the Lord* by our National Senates.

For was it not a foul Stain upon the Honour of PARLIAMENTS, that within *their* Walls this horrid Rebellion should be formed, carried on, and compleated? And that *their* Name, Wisdom, and Authority should be prostituted to so wicked a Work? God was therefore very gracious to them, in giving them an Opportunity of wiping off this Reproach at the RESTORATION; wherein he suffered no other Power to interpose, neither Army nor Fleet, neither Insurrection nor Invasion; but he reserved that great Work entire to the PARLIAMENT, that They might be the sole Instrument in Restoring what they had unhappily Destroyed, and make some Atonement to the Crown whose Rights they had invaded, and to the People whose Trust they had misapply'd.

But God was farther gracious to these National Assemblies, that as he put the Power into their Hands, so did he the Zeal into their Hearts, to vindicate their Honour by solemn ACTS, Recording to After-ages their joint Protestation of their Abhorrence and Detestation against that traiterous REBELLION, with all its Train of Wickedness, Sacrilege, Murther, Robbery, and Regicide; and against all those unchristian Principles that lead to it: and Enacting the Observation of two solemn DAYS to be kept for ever; the one of Humiliation to deprecate the Vengeance due to the Sin of Rebellion inflamed by the Effusion of Royal Blood;

the other of Thanksgiving (as it is this Day) for the Blessing of the RESTORATION. May these Acts remain upon perpetual Record, and may these Days stand for ever in the *British* Calendar; and may every *British* Parliament in its Succession, by observing these Statutes, and by framing new ones for the safety of that Constitution then Restored, not suffer this *fretting Leprosy* to spread, nor even the *Stain of it to be seen upon the Walls of their House*.

But the Enacting the best Laws are not a greater Security to the Constitution, than that Reverence this HONOURABLE HOUSE hath taught Posterity to practise towards the Throne. For should the inferior Members be encouraged again to rise up in a contemptuous manner against the Head, so as in effect to say, *We have no need of thee*, alas! what must become of the Body?

There is an Awe which Majesty itself, tho' solitary and unadorn'd with Vertue, or even shaded with Defects, casts around the Persons of Princes as a Guard and a Glory. With what Depths of Loyal Veneration then ought all Subjects to approach the *British* Throne, when the Person sitting thereon, besides Her other princely Qualities that equal Her Character to any of her contemporary Princes, has this peculiar Lustre with which She outshines them all, that She is allowed also (like the *Best* of Her Predecessors) "to be the best Christian that
 " the Age, in which She lives, produceth. Clarend.
Vol. III.
p. 199.

But we ought not to omit that other no less peculiar Ingredient in Her Royal Character, *viz.* Her perfect Integrity in doing all things for the Publick Good, without the usual Tinctures of Ambition,

Ava-

Avarice, Revenge, or even a just Resentment ; referring Her Self and Her Actions to God alone, who alone is the Judge of Princes and their Actions ; and who will be jealous over his Anointed to vindicate Her in a publick manner from the Misrepresentations cast upon her Government. For he is the same God, that reprov'd and punish'd before all the Congregation those envious *Israelites*, who fomented the like criminal Jealousies against *Moses* their Ruler, tho' so renowned likewise for unparallel'd Meekness and Affection towards his People. For, saith God, *My Servant Moses is not so : he is faithful in all my House. Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant Moses ? And the Anger of the Lord was kindled against them.*

And we cannot but believe, that God having set our SOVEREIGN high among his Vicegerents here below, not only placed Her, as Supreme, at the Head of the best Church and best Government in the World, but also, as Arbitress, over the Affairs of *Europe* ; and having enabled Her to compleat its Settlement by a " Peace, Safe, Honourable, and Advantageous ; and having above all clothed Her with Goodness equal to Her Greatness : Having, we say, thus made Her to be one of the truly greatest Persons on Earth, we cannot but believe, that She is his greatest Care, and the peculiar Charge of his holy Angels. And may he continue this Charge to them concerning Her, to watch *about Her path, when she goeth forth and cometh in ; and about Her bed, when she lieth down and riseth up ; yea, to bear Her up in their Hands* above all the Difficulties of so great a Government ; till in his time (may that time be as distant from our days, as it is

is dreadful to our Thoughts) they conduct Her to
 a Throne above ; when, as a faithful and wise Ser- Mat. 24.
 vant, whom her Lord hath made Ruler over his House 55.
 hold to give them meat in due season ; She having
 according to Her Commission, fed them with a Psal. 78.
 faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with 72.
 all Her Power, shall enter into the joy of her Lord,
 to Reign with him for ever. Even so, Amen.

F I N I S.

*SERMONS Written by the Re-
verend Dr. BISSE, and Sold by Hen-
ry Clements at the Half-Moon in
St. Paul's Church-yard.*

A *Defence of Episcopacy: A Sermon Preach'd before
the University of Oxford, on Trinity Sunday, 1708.*

*Jehosaphat's Charge: A Sermon Preach'd at the Assizes
held at Oxford, July 12, 1711, before the Right Honou-
rable Mr. Justice Powell and Mr. Justice Dormer.*

*The Merit and Usefulness of Building Churches: A Ser-
mon Preach'd at the Opening of the Church at St. Mary
in the Town and County of Southampton, on Christmass-
Day, 1711.*

*A Sermon Preach'd before the University of Oxon, on
Whitsunday, 1712.*

*A Sermon Preach'd before the University of Oxford,
on As-Sunday, July 12, 1713.*

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